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ENST 595.01: Special Topics - Environmental Politics and Policies

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ENST 595.01 – Environmental Politics and Policy

TU/TH 12:30 – 1:50 PM

Forestry 206

Fall 2021

Instructor

Robin Saha, Ph.D.

Office: Jeannette Rankin Hall, Rm. 018 (basement)

Office Hours (in person and by Zoom): [Tues. 2:00 – 3:00 pm](#), [Wed. 10:00 am – Noon](#), and by appt.¹

Phone: 243-6285; Email: robin.saha@umontana.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW

The goal is for students to develop an understanding of the complex dynamics of public policymaking and skills needed for active, engaged citizenship and policy-related careers. The focus is on current domestic environmental and natural resource policy issues. Student learn about the workings of governmental policymaking institutions, political processes by which governmental decisions are made, and ways that various policy actors attempt to influence those decisions. The course begins with an overview of the policy process, i.e., gaining an understanding of how environmental problems are recognized and get on the governmental agenda and how policies are formulated, adopted, implemented, evaluated, and may be changed or terminated. Next, we will learn about various policy theories and models including the Government Politics Model and how they can be applied to analyze and understand current environmental policy issues, predict outcomes and identify ways that various policy actors can strategically influence outcomes in their favor.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will have:

- Understand the basic organization of and interrelationships between federal and state governments and the role of local government in environmental and natural resource policy.
- Developed an understanding of policy models and theories and be able to apply them to analyze current policy issues, including decision-making processes of governmental institutions, including legislative and administrative (executive branch) bodies, and the courts.
- Understand and appreciate the influence of political opportunity structures, interest groups, political organizations, think tanks, scientists, money, the media, public opinion, current events, social changes and the like in governmental decision making related to natural resource and environmental policy.
- Demonstrated the ability to conduct policy research, policy analysis, and analytic writing in order to analyze current policy issues, engage in civic discourse, predict outcomes, and strategically advise policy actors.

¹ You can “drop by” during the hours listed in person or just click on one of the links above for Tuesday or Wednesday to Zoom. If those times don’t work for you, see me after class or email me to set up an appointment at another time.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

The quality of your learning and that of your peers will depend on being present and prepared for class. Class will be held mostly in seminar format, and will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, guest speakers, videos, and student presentations. The success of the class and your learning depends on your active participation in class. Students who need to miss class should notify the instructor in advance and find out from the instructor or another student what was covered, including any course updates or announcements.

Email Communication: In accordance with privacy laws the University requires me to communicate with students about academic matters through their (your) University email account.

A Note about the Course Content: This course assumes students have a moderate level of understanding of the U.S. political system, governmental institutions and policy making processes. Although many policy terms and concepts will be defined, it is important that we all share some common language and knowledge base for conversing about environmental policy. In the first week of class, several optional readings are provided for students who feel they would benefit from a primer or “refresher” on American government and policy making.

Obtaining Assistance: I am available if you need assistance outside of class or encounter difficulties of any kind, particularly with developing your issue investigation ideas. Please see me after class, email me, come see me during office hours, or set up an appointment via email, ideally well ahead of due dates.

CITATION STYLES

There are three preferred citation style options for citing sources in written work for this class: APA (American Psychological Association); ASA (American Sociological Association); and Chicago. The first two styles call for in-text (author-year) citations and a separate list of references, whereas the latter calls for footnotes (instead of in-text citations). Please do not use endnotes. Page numbers should be included for in-text citations and footnotes for all quotes, and are recommended for all citations.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The assignments for the class are as follows:

1. Reading response papers (3)
2. Current issue investigation and analysis: for this major assignment, you will investigate and analyze a current policy issue, predict the outcome (governmental decisions) of the associated policy debates (or explain past decisions), and offer policy advice to one or more policy actors. This assignment will be completed in parts as follows with each part subsequently refined and incorporated into the next:
 - a. Current issue investigation proposal (3 double spaced pages) – **Due Fri., Oct. 8**
 - b. Policy actor interview plan – **Due Fri., Oct. 29**
 - c. Issue background paper (~10 pages) – **Due Tues., Nov. 9**
 - d. Current issue investigation paper (~20 double spaced pages) – **Due, Fri., Dec. 10**
3. Current issue investigation presentation (30-40 minutes)

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity. All work and ideas submitted are expected to be your own or must be fully and accurately attributed to verifiable sources. The *Academic Policies and Procedures in the University Catalog* states: "Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion." If you have any doubts about plagiarism and citing of others' work or ideas, especially web sources, please consult the instructor.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Course grades will be based on:

- Class attendance/participation (10%)
- Reaction papers (10%)
- Current issue investigation proposal (10%)
- Issue background paper (20%)
- Policy actor interview plan (40%)
- Final presentation (10%)

Course grades will be assigned as follows:

<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
92.5-100%	A	80.0-82.4%	B-	67.5-69.9%	D+
90.0-92.4%	A-	77.5-79.9%	C+	62.5-67.4%	D
87.5-89.9%	B+	72.5-77.4%	C	0-62.4%	F
82.5-87.4%	B	70.0-72.4%	C-		

Your participation grade will take into account: your class attendance; punctuality; preparation; contributions class discussions; and productive and supportive engagement with your peers, guest speakers and the instructor.

Evaluation of written and oral assignments will be based on the appropriateness of sources consulted, quality of the writing, research conducted, documentation, level of analysis, insight, originality, organization, clarity, and delivery (for presentations). There will be penalties for assignments turned in late unless arrangements are made with me well in advance of the due date. In the case of submitted assignments that exceed the page limit, only the number of pages assigned will be read for grading purposes; this requirement is intended to encourage the practice of pithy writing.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE). If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact the ODE at: (406) 243-2243, ode@umontana.edu, or visit www.umt.edu/disability for more information. Retroactive accommodation requests will not be honored, so please, do not delay. As your instructor, I will work with you and the ODE to implement an effective accommodation, and you are welcome to contact me privately if you wish.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS AND CONTINGENCIES

UM recommends that students get the COVID-19 vaccine. Please direct questions or concerns about vaccines to Curry Health Center. Mask use is required within the classroom. Seating arrangements (sitting in the same spot each class period) and daily class attendance will be used to support contact tracing efforts if needed. Drinking liquids and eating food is discouraged within the classroom. If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330. If you are required to isolate or quarantine, you will receive support in the class to ensure continued academic progress. Quarantining students may be assigned short homework assignments to serve the place of classroom activities. If you need a COVID-related accommodation in order to safely attend class, please contact the [Office of Disability Equity \(ODE\)](#) (formerly Disability Services for Students) for assistance.

For further COVID-19 information, please refer to the UM COVID Operations Plan at: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus/campus-covid-plan/default.php>

Should we need to switch to remote or distance learning as the semester progresses and you need technical support, please visit [UM's Student IT webpage](#) or make an appointment with them. You can also self-refer to the [UM Solutions Center](#).

READINGS AND RESOURCES

There are no required textbooks. All readings will be available as hyperlinks or for downloading and printing through the course Moodle course webpage. See: <https://moodle.umt.edu/>. Reading schedules will be handed out in class and posted on Moodle as well.